



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

April 2011



# ADDENDUM

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## MORRISON RUN PROJECT

### APPENDIX C1 - BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

Bradford Ranger District, Allegheny National Forest

McKean and Warren Counties, Pennsylvania,  
Corydon, Hamilton and Mead Townships

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## NEW INFORMATION CONCERNING FEDERALLY LISTED ENDANGERED MUSSELS

On February 14, 2012, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a final rule in the Federal Register (Federal Register 2012a) designating the rayed-bean (*Villosa fabalis*) and snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*) as Endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). The new designation changes the status in the Biological Assessment (Appendix C1) from "Candidate" to "Endangered" for both species. No critical habitat was identified for either species in the final rule.

Likewise, on March 13, 2012, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service issued a final rule in the Federal Register (Federal Register 2012b) designating the sheepnose (*Plethobasus cyphus*) as Endangered under the Endangered Species Act. The new designation changes the status in the Biological Assessment (Appendix C1) from "Candidate" to "Endangered". The final rule also stated that no critical habitat has been identified to date.

The rayed-bean and sheepnose were analyzed in the Forest Biological Assessment (USDA-FS 2007c) as Candidate species under the Endangered Species Act. The snuffbox at that time had no status under the Endangered Species Act, so it was not analyzed. The snuffbox does however, have suitable habitat within the Proclamation boundary in the Allegheny River.

The 2007 Forest Plan includes standards and guidelines that are similar to the conservation measures included in the 1999 Biological Opinion. Because these conservation measures have been effective in reducing the risk of zebra mussel introduction to the point that no zebra mussels have been detected in the Allegheny Reservoir, the Forest Service concluded that the operation of boat launches, in conjunction with the standards and guidelines and terms and conditions that address other Forest activities, is "not likely to adversely affect" the clubshell, northern riffleshell, rayed-bean, and sheepnose (USDA-FS 2007c). The USFWS concurred with that determination (USDI-FWS 2007). Because of the very recent listing of the snuffbox, specific terms and conditions have yet to be established. However, because the snuffbox occurs in the same or similar habitats to the other four mussel species, the existing standards and guidelines and terms and conditions will be applied as warranted until discussions between the ANF and USFWS determine whether these existing ones are adequate or new ones need to be implemented.

The waterways located in the Morrison Run project area are not within the 13 percent Area of the Forest that drains directly into the Allegheny River where the only suitable habitat on the Forest is known to occur. Based on stream size and water temperature, and considering these species have not been found in other habitats outside of the Allegheny River on the ANF, the cold-water streams within the project and cumulative effects analysis area are not considered suitable for any of the five mussels. Refer to page 26 in the Biological Assessment (Appendix C1) for the effects analysis and determination for all five mussel species.

## REFERENCES

Federal Register. 2012a. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Determination of Endangered Status for the Rayed Bean and Snuffbox Mussels Throughout Their Ranges. Federal Register, February 14, 2012, Vol. 77, No. 33, pages 8632-8665.

Federal Register. 2012b. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Determination of Endangered Status for the Sheepnose and Spectaclecase Mussels Throughout Their Ranges. Federal Register, March 13, 2012, Vol. 77, No. 49, pages 14914-14949.

USDA-FS. 2007c. Biological Assessment, Allegheny National Forest, Forest Plan Revision. (Forest BA) Warren, PA.

USDI-FWS 2007. United States Fish and Wildlife Service concurrence letter regarding determinations in the Revised Forest Plan Biological Assessment. January 2007. 21 pp.

Signed: /Brent Pence/

Date: 4/23/2012